



Urban Rivers Restoration Pilot Fact Sheet
Lower Passaic River Remediation and Ecosystem Restoration
New Jersey

Background - The Lower Passaic River covers approximately 173 square miles in a highly developed urban area of Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Passaic Counties in northern New Jersey. These four counties have a combined population of 2.8 million people with an average density of 4, 700 people per square mile. The Lower Passaic River once supported extensive tidal wetlands and provided significant benthic habitat. The Hudson-Raritan Estuary, into which the Passaic flows, has among the highest levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins in sediments in the U.S. The Lower Passaic River has been under a fish and shellfish "do not eat" advisory since 1983, pursuant to New Jersey Administrative Code, based on PCBs, dioxin and chlordane contamination.

Current Activities - A Federal partnership of the US Environmental Protection Agency, US Army Corps of Engineers has been collaborating with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, New Jersey Maritime Resources/New Jersey Department of Transportation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and US Fish and Wildlife Services and other trustee agencies on a joint effort to recommend an all-inclusive solution for the Lower Passaic River Basin. This solution would include both remediation and restoration to address the various environmental issues that face this historic urban river segment and restore it as a centerpiece of the region's aquatic environment.

Authority and Funding - The Lower Passaic River Ecosystem Restoration Study was authorized under the Hudson-Raritan study authorization, in a resolution of the Committee

on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives. Funds to conduct the Section 905(b) Preliminary Analysis were provided in the FY 200 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, and funds to conduct the feasibility study were provided under the FY 2001 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act.

Additionally, the CERCLA component of this joint study is being undertaken in conjunction with the Diamond Alkali Superfund site. The USEPA, the Corps, and the State of New Jersey have identified a \$20 million comprehensive study to remediate and restore the lower Passaic River Basin. The Corps and the State of New Jersey would cost share \$10 million and the remainder would be under CERCLA.

The Future - Over time, the pilot's success will become evident in a healthy riparian habitat, an enhancement in water quality, an increase in recreational functions, a removal of fish consumption bans, reduction of contaminant levels in dredged materials and an overall reversal in economic retardation.



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